TOWN
&
COUNTRY
CHURCH

Boyce Bailey Theological Seminary

Kirkridge: Toward a Dedicated Order in the Ministry

JOHN OLIVER NELSON

MEN seem to drift away from rural and other pioneer ministries chiefly for two reasons: lack of a vivid consciousness of mission, and lack of a strong shared workers' fellowship. Compared with these, the old objections of finances, inconvenience, distance, isolation from "cultured people"—none of these is so disastrous as the failure of passion and the failure of mutual support.

To remedy the first defect, we must redefine and rekindle in these days a deep sense of vocation in the "unconventional" church tasks. To meet the second, we must provide and maintain a family relationship among workers, like that of the old "mission bands," the churchly orders, or the Student Volunteers. We need not so much surveys and studies and strategies, as inflamed men, ready with their lives for difficult assignments in this country.

Sharing these two concerns, a handful of younger ministers began to meet and pray and plan two years ago in a small New Jersey community. A labor minister, a rural pastor, two student workers, the leader of a conventional parish, three seminarians pledged to lifelong rural work—these were the nucleus. We were "hungry men," but in our first few meetings together, that fact itself was not enough to result in our being fed. Our hunger, however, was to explore and share a newly prophetic, social-minded, Spirit-filled ministry for these days.

The Iona Community

All of this group have been watching with fascination that dramatic movement within the younger ministry of the Church of Scotland, The Iona Community. Seminarians give themselves for two years upon graduation as members of the community, pledged to work two-by-two for that period at subsistence wages in the most challenging spots in church life there. They become industrial chaplains, rural pastors, missioners to new housing projects, revivers of closed slum parishes, assistants in an expanding larger-parish scheme. One divinity professor recently remarked over there that the ablest men now coming up to the divinity halls are those caught by the dynamic, unconventional, selfless service of members of the Iona Community.

The life of that movement, which has already begun to mean much in the Church of Scotland, centers in the Island of Iona. There as members are "in community," these young parsons with an equal number of devoted artisans, are rebuilding the Iona abbey and cathedral erected by St. Columba and in ruins now for 900 years. They follow an almost monastic regimen—making clear the fact that they have no "high church" aim in it. The fellowship welded during the summer months on Iona is released in effective dynamic as members return to their tasks on the mainland.

Retreat-and-study center

Granting that America is vastly different from the small state-churched Scottish situation, our group of "hungry men" decided that somewhere in the pattern of our church life there can be a similar reclaiming of the color and energy and reality of that Celtic movement. We began to seek ways of following not the pattern, but the inspiration, of Iona.

One step has been to secure a 350-acre farm in the Pocono Mountain country near Delaware Water Gap in eastern Pennsylvania. Worn

These Papers

BECAUSE of wartime printing conditions, it has been found necessary to issue TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH as a bulletin without regular monthly frequency. We expect, however, to be able to make available a series of informal papers, and to print nine of these issues in the course of twelve months, as we had planned and promised. The Committee on Town and Country of the Home Missions Council and the Federal Council of Churches asks you to be patient if copies do not arrive regularly.

Brief stories of what people are doing in local congregations and communities will be the chief features. The aim is to help put the worker in the small community into touch with numerous activities.

Part of Larger Program

The paper will be an important part of an enlarged "cooperative rural church program," that will encourage a national "rural church movement." The paper will be closely linked with a regularly held National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country.

This Issue
No. 10
Published September, 1944

out old fields, a ridge view for 40 miles in three directions, a sharecropperish ancient farmhouse, and many acres of timber make up the general view. Within a few miles, there are dozens of struggling country churches, a number of quarries, small factories, and farmers whose living is either prosperous, precarious, or just possible.

At this farm, Kirkridge, and Kirkridge House at its center, a number of varied groups have already begun to hold small conferences and retreats. But as the Kirkridge "hungry men" have met and worked there, a careful pattern of devotion, manual work, and brief discussion has been sought. The group has discovered new disciplines in corporate silence, especially during group manual-work projects.

Almost every minister and seminarian included has set his hand to a pioneer job. The Kirkridge "hungry men" are known to expect, already, a certain selflessness and creativeness in each other's ministry. Not enough activity has thus far been carried through "in community" to form any fixed discipline for the group: there will be far more experimenting before any such step is taken.

The chiefly memorable aspect of the Kirkridge "hungry men's" coming together has been their eager use of silence. A secondary aspect has been the shared manual work, in which all take part. In discussions and presentation of papers, the group has felt only a third degree of interest.

Possibilities of a "dedicated order"

Can such an approach both deepen the sense of vocation among these Kirkridge "hungry men" over the years, and bind them together in a mutually supporting "order"? Does a rural pastor, meeting thus with a minister to migrants, a labor-church leader, a prophetic industrial chaplain, rediscover his own crucial ministry? These are the hopes of Kirkridge.

The movement is not being permitted to crystallize into an "order" quickly: we are not wise enough to set the pattern thus definitely as yet. Any holier-than-thou attitude we must avoid like the plague. Life vows, celibacy, obedience other than to the group, or any other mediaeval aspects of a "dedicated order" are not in the plan. But if the ministry does need an unassuming, humble, utterly devoted corps of ministers within its great ranks, there is room today for the sort of movement which is taking shape in Kirkridge. From the chaste stone chapel dominating our top ridge and the furrowed fields below, and in the quiet manual work of kindred followers of Christ, it is our prayer that there may be released a new hard-bitten, humble dedication to neglected but crucial tasks of the Kingdom in these days.

The Oliver Kelley

• A great Liberty Ship has been named for Oliver Kelley, founder of the Grange. It was recently launched in California. The official program for the occasion contained the following statement:

"This ship will be named in honor of Oliver Kelley, Founder of the National Grange. Mr. Kelley, whose memory this ship is destined to honor, rose overnight from an obscure clerk in the Department of Agriculture at Washington, D. C., to one of the leading figures in American Agriculture. This was because he recognized the need for organized action among the farmers of the nation, and had vision enough to start such a fraternity. In 1866 Kelley conceived the idea for an organization for farmers, run by farmers, that would be able to speak and act for rural America. Two years later he finally overcame tremendous odds in successfully establishing the Grange of the Order of Patrons of Husbandry. In the intervening years the Grange has accomplished much for the benefit of America's farming industry, and today the Grange is the most potent single farmers group in America. Our nation is deeply indebted to Oliver Kelley, and it is well that one of these ships, destined to help carry out our winning fight for freedom, should bear his name."

Convocation Notes

Elgin, Ill.—Nov. 14-16

• The program of the National Convocation on the Church in Town and Country was mailed with the June issue of TOWN AND COUNTRY CHURCH. Because of wartime travel and housing conditions, it will be necessary for all persons who intend to attend to write to the Committee on Town and Country, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y. by October 15.

Plans call for the church people of Elgin to furnish free lodging for the nights of November 14 and 15 only, except as denominational conferences may be otherwise arranged.

It is best to plan to arrive in Elgin as early as possible the morning of November 14.

Elgin is one hour's run by interurban west of Chicago. Some of those attending may wish to use the Chicago hotels, but will have to make their own reservations.

The entire afternoon of Wednesday, November 15, will be available, by rearrangement of the program, for meetings of denominational groups. These will be held, so far as possible, in the Elgin church of the denomination interested.

As this is written, it is announced that at least one denominational conference will hold over until the 17th. All denominational arrangements are in charge of officials of the denomination.

Anyone interested in the town and country church may attend. All attending are invited to attend the meetings of commissions—choose one and stay by it.

Be sure to invite lay people—men, women, young people.

Write promptly to this office for extra copies of the program, available to you without charge.

The Family In Worship

by ROBERT L. CLINGAN

Tuning Up

Our religious practices and devotional periods are a striking contrast to the discordant sound of an orchestra getting its individual instruments in tune. At the same time there is an inescapable similarity in that our prayer and worship are ways of bringing the tone of each individual life in key with the fundamental harmonies of the universe, the purposes which are eternal.

Two fundamental insights of our evangelical churches are that man glorifies God in his daily work, and that every man is his own priest.

If the purposes of God are to be fulfilled in daily life, then each new day ought to have somewhere near its beginning spiritual preparation. The violinist in an orchestra does not tune his instrument once a week, but immediately before each concert. To the Christian, each day is a concert to the glory of God.

If it is true that each man is his own priest, every family ought to aspire to the cultivation of its devotional life without the personal presence of a minister.

How to Begin

How may a family begin the practice of family worship? One of the best ways is the use of "The Secret Place" which contains a verse of scripture, a scripture reference, a meditation, and a prayer for each day of the quarter for which it is published.

There are also books available containing excellent material for daily users. E. Stanley Jones, "Abundant Living" is highly recommended. There is the classic, "Meaning of Prayer," by Harry Emerson Fosdick.

Some family groups have a program of Bible study, taking a chapter a day. One member of the family reads the chapter. The group briefly discusses the greatest truth to be found in the chapter, or the application of some part of the reading to their family life or their daily work. One member makes a prayer for the group or each member offers a sentence prayer.

Some of the richest experiences we have had in our church life have been through the sentence prayers of a group of Guild Girls, many from non-church homes, who shared in the unbroken circle of prayer. When it comes to sentence prayers, even a four-year-old child can make a contribution to the spiritual life of a group.

If members of a family have time, some of the finest devotional experiences can be developed by each member planning one period of family worship. A concern may be presented, a spiritual truth discovered in the course of a man's work, or a reading from a woman's favorite magazine. The sources of material for family worship are unlimited.

As valuable as other materials are, no devotional period is complete unless it includes something from the great storehouse of our religious heritage, the Bible. It is also incomplete unless someone has prayed, either aloud or in silence, the prayer of his own heart.

Finding Time

In our modern hustle and bustle, the greatest problem is finding a time when the family can be together and when members of the group can unhurriedly worship God with their entire selves. Each family can best determine the fifteen minutes or more which fits into its schedule best. Once the most suitable time has been found, that time ought to be observed regularly. Once the pattern has been permanently established, one can enter into the experience without feeling that he is taking time from something else.

Among farm people there are so many variances and uncertainties that even meals become irregular. Yet a family can determine it will observe family devotions as often as it eats breakfast, and with the same regularity followed in feeding the chickens or milking the cows. Farmers who have discovered that they can establish a pattern of regularity in daily work with its results in high productivity, can establish a regularity in family devotions which will bring a life of inner peace, outward poise, and an expanding experience of Christian service.

Prayers for Family Worship

Our Heavenly Father:

We bow our heads and open our hearts to Thee who art forever with us, closer than breathing, nearer than hands and feet.

May we discover something of Thee in every person we meet and remain conscious of our partnership with Thee until every task that belongs to this day has been completed.

Open our eyes to Thy truth, quicken our hearts with Thy courage, give to our will Thy determination to learn even when truth is hard to receive, to love even the unlovely, and to work when an honest task seems least rewarding. In Jesus Name, *Amen.*

Our Father:

We gather together as a family seeking Thy guidance and the quickening of Thy Holy Spirit. May the experiences of today bind us closer to each other and link our lives as individuals and as a family to Thy eternal purposes.

Open our eyes to any fresh revelation of Thy love and goodness that awaits us in home, field, school or market-place.

Forgive us our weakness, blindness, and bigotry, even as we are tolerant of the limitations of our fellowmen. Make us fit to dwell on the face of the earth and lead us into that holy fellowship of eternal life. *Amen.*

High School Boys Conduct Rural Life Sunday Service

The United Church of North Fairfield, Ohio, Rev. George Crenshaw, minister arranged a Rural Life Sunday service by inviting the boys of the Future Farmers of America in the local high school to conduct the worship service. They worked out their own worship program, using materials from several denominations.

In the service, seeds and soil were dedicated. One of the young men said in his talk, "We need the church that our education may not lack direction." The minister had no part in the program. The offering of the day was sent to help the work of the Rural Department of the Ohio Council of Churches.

"A Preacher's Wife Must Be Able to Do Everything"

Reflections of a Rural Parson's Wife

Mrs. E. W. Gebhard (Anna Laura) is the wife of a rural minister at Princeton, Minn.

DEAR SIS:—

So we're comrades in the rural ministry! When you wrote that you and Milt had decided to devote your lives to the service of the rural church and its people, I could not help but rejoice—and reflect, for I know something of the joys and trials that lie ahead. You write and ask: "What is our country church going to expect of me, the preacher's wife?"

The rural preacher's wife is a fortunate person, Sis—at least I can't think of my lot without feeling an upsurge of gratitude. I am grateful that our ministry needs four hands working together, rather than two, and that my hands, and heart, and mind have felt the same call to consecrated living in the service of Christ as my husband's.

I'm glad that you chose to serve the country church. Rural life has been neglected. It needs young, consecrated enthusiasm. It needs an adequately trained, spiritually sensitive ministry. And it has its rewards. We live intimately with our people. The shepherd and his flock, the farmer and his field—how many of the great examples of the Bible are within our common experience! Then we have a chance, too, to see community life change and grow because of the leaven we have helped hide in the loaf of our Christian fellowship. Our light does shine.

Of course wherever there are such opportunities there are responsibilities. I don't wonder that they frighten you. I know you are thinking of the old adage: "A preacher's wife must be able to do everything—but woe be unto her if she does it!" I'm afraid there's some truth to it, but it's not the whole truth. There are two little rules in this regard which I have tried to remember. Perhaps they will be helpful to you.

First, the things that I do are not nearly so important as the spirit in which I do them. People will remember a gracious disposition longer than they will a well-baked hot dish for the church supper. They will respond more to a serene countenance than to a polished report at the missionary society, and a generous, forgiving spirit will bear me up through seas of church grief. The church women would be sorely disappointed if they expected me to manage the next church supper, but they have a right to expect of me, and of their pastor, that we be spiritually sensitive to their needs, and that our own faith be buoyant and vital.

The second rule is this: My aim is not to undertake a great many tasks (which perhaps I can do better than anyone else) but to inspire others to act. I accept those tasks which others are not willing or are not trained to do, only until I have trained or inspired someone else to do them. You see, Sis, the purpose of church work is not to build a well-oiled, efficient machine, but to change lives. And people grow more Christ-like by sharing in His fellowship and by serving Him in satisfying ways. Our chief task is to open doors of Christian service to others. It's hard, but to see lives unfold and expand as they begin to discover the radiance of God's love, is God's own reward.

I cannot think of our work without feeling a great debt of gratitude for all we receive,—far beyond our deservings. Just think, our lives are spent in fellowship with people who are trying to live at their best. No wonder they are so often an inspiration to us.

And finally, I keep remembering the words of the Master, "Ye have not chosen Me, but I have chosen you." It's a great life, Sis, and I rejoice to see you share it.

Love and best wishes,

ANNA LAURA

—From The Church Woman

Town & Country Church

Published by the Committee on Town and Country, Home Missions Council of N. A., and the Federal Council of the Churches of Christ in America.

297 Fourth Avenue New York 10, N. Y.

15c a copy; nine copies, $1.00

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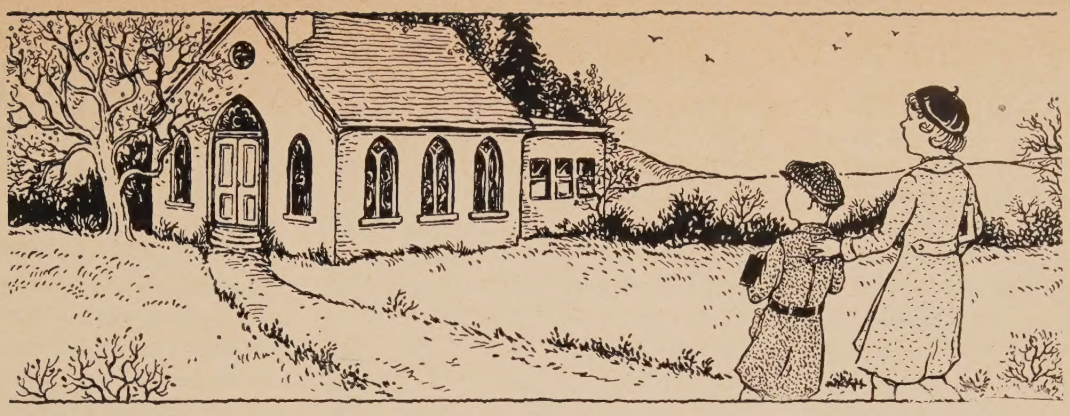

About Church Buildings

• Many of our churches have built gymnasiums as part of their extensive physical plants. They were right in assuming that wholesome recreation such as one gets in a well supervised gym is a spiritual service to a community. But they were wrong in assuming that it was their function to provide the gym. In one of those churches the gym is never used except for an occasional volleyball game and the dust settles deep on the locker room floor. The difficulty is not the lack of young people nor the lack of interest in recreation, but rather the fact that the gym equipment in the church is superfluous with a good high school gym and an adequate YMCA within a few blocks of the church, both of which are available to church groups. Another small town church is desperately trying to support its bowling alleys in the face of competition from far more efficiently maintained privately owned alleys. In that community it is considered a mark of religious devotion to be willing to play on poor bowling alleys.

There was a time when the only schools in existence were those conducted by the churches, when the only hospitals were church hospitals, and when the only relief one could hope for if he were unemployed was the aid of some religious society. Gradually Christian ideals have penetrated our society enough so that our governments now support schools and hospitals and economic relief. The church need have no regrets about this shift in responsibility. We should be proud that secular society has seen the value of religious charity and has taken these responsibilities from our shoulders. On the same basis we should not feel it is a peculiar prerogative of the church to have a kitchen, a parish hall, and other social-recreational facilities. If a school or a community building can do a better job of supplying these, let them. What would be better than a community church having a fellowship dinner in the same community building where the Farmers' Union and the local businessmen's clubs hold their dinners?

Let's take the example of a community church in a government built community in the Midwest. Here school, library, Red Cross, and recreational facilities are all built into one community center. Though the church also meets there, it finds the present schoolroom-chapel inadequate for worship and wants to build. But the church members are not talking in terms of the chapel-parish hall-classroom building that has now become traditional among Protestant churches. They want the most efficient facilities available and they want to continue to express their unity with their community. Therefore, they are planning a chapel only. For their Church School and their church social gatherings they will continue to use the facilities of the community building.

LE ROY J. DAY

Acknowledgment

• Town and Country Church acknowledges the aid of the Dairymen's League of New York, through Ted H. Townsend, by furnishing numerous photographs. T. and C. C. now needs about 8 volunteers like Ted from other states, for the 1944-45 publication program.

A Prayer for Owners of Land

From the Church Prayerbook of Edward VI

• We heartily pray thee to send thy Holy Spirit into the hearts of them that possess the grounds and dwelling places of the earth, that they, remembering themselves to be Thy tenants, may not rack and stretch out the rents of their houses and lands, nor yet take unreasonable fines and incomes after the manner of covetous worldlings but so let them out to others, that the inhabitants thereof may both be able to pay the rents, and also honestly to live, to nourish their families, and to relieve the poor.

Give them grace also to consider that they are but strangers and pilgrims in this world, having here no dwelling place but seeking one to come, that they remembering the short continuance of their life, may be content with that that is sufficient, and not join house to house, nor couple land to land, to the impoverishment of other, but so behave themselves in letting out their tenements, lands, and pastures that after this life they may be received into everlasting dwelling places: through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

—Quoted in the April, 1944, *American Journal of Economics and Sociology*, by Francis Neilson, giving source as *Liturgies of Edward VI*, Parker Society Publications, P. 458.

"Restoring the Earth"

• The Reader's Digest, Pleasantville, N. Y. publishes a discussion guide under the title above. Single copies free on application.

Group Thinking by Rural Ministers

• The ministers in the Rural Pastors' Short Course at the College of Agriculture, Urbana, Illinois met in various groups and formulated recommendations. Among them were the following:

There is need for a policy of cooperation among churches in the study of community needs and problems. Each local church should have a small council composed of the minister, one adult layman, and one young person to carry on cooperation with the other churches of the community.

There is a pressing need for enlisting the laity in a program of reaching those families not being served by any churches. Lay visitors should become active. Approaches should be made looking toward the integration of the programs of the church and of the public school. The church should help the community to discuss school problems. When the community desires it, religious education programs should be introduced in the public schools.

Ohio Council of Churches

• Walter C. Schnopp, formerly of the Agricultural Extension Service of West Virginia, has became Director of Information of the Ohio Council of Churches, Columbus, Ohio.

W. H. Thompson, in addition to serving as Director of the Town and Country Department, has been named Director of Religious Education.

Oklahoma Council of Churches

• The Committee on Town and Country Church of the Oklahoma Council of Churches and Christian Education, Oklahoma City, has formulated its aims and program of work in an interesting leaflet available from the office of the Council, 914 Braniff Bldg., Oklahoma City.

Measurement

• From the Pacific Coast comes the following: Those speakers who think by the inch and talk by the yard should be helped out of the room by the foot.

"Wheat is a Divine Food"

• Henry Ford is reported to have made the statement above at Tecumseh, Michigan, July 8, 1944, when he went there to help Perry Hayden and his neighbors harvest a fourteen-acre field of wheat. Mr. Hayden began four years ago with a cubic inch of wheat. Each year he has given a tenth of the crop to the Tecumseh Friends Church and has planted the rest. The project is to continue for six years. Mr. Hayden estimates that 1,500 acres will be required for the final planting. The 1944 crop was grown on some of Mr. Ford's land and he had a part in the harvest.

Manual for Town and Country Churches

• The Unit of Rural Church Work, Board of National Missions, Presbyterian Church in the U. S. A., has available a mimeographed edition of *A Manual for Town and Country Churches,* prepared by Dr. Henry S. Randolph, secretary of the unit. Copies are available at 25 cents each from the office, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y. The manual runs to over 130 pages. Guides for a community religious census are included. Many aspects of the work of the church are referred to.

World Wide Communion Sunday

• October 1, 1944 World Wide Communion Sunday will be observed. Secure information from your denomination or from the Department of Evangelism, Federal Council of Churches, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

Visual Sermons

• "One picture is worth a thousand words," says Rev. A. Francis Allison, rector of the Warren County Associate Mission in New Jersey. His use of visual sermons is described in the *Rural Messenger* for February, 1944 (281 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.)

Patterson Farm School

• The progressive rural program of Patterson School, Lenoir, N. C. is described in the Rural Messenger for February (281 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.)

Returning Members of Armed Services

• The readjustment of the returning service personnel to civilian life is one of the most important and immediate problems which will face the country after the war; and it is one in which the Church must be prepared to assume its full share of the responsibility, the Rev. Seward Hiltner, executive secretary of the Commission on Religion and Health of the Federal Council of Churches, declares.

Announcing the publication of the first pamphlet in a series on *The Church and Returning Service Personnel,* which the Commission is preparing in collaboration with the Christian Commission on Camp and Defense Communities, Mr. Hiltner said: "Before the Church does any program planning to meet the needs of the returning service men, however, it should have a thorough understanding of their specific attitudes and problems."

A Goal in Indiana

• I. H. Hull, President of the Indiana Farm Bureau, declared at the last annual meeting of that organization:

"We are thinking in terms of a rural community in Indiana that will raise its livestock; produce its own dairy products, its own poultry, its own gardens; have its own soybean extractor for its own meal to feed its livestock. This community will have its feed grinder and mill, an elevator and building supplies service. Its members will be supplied with custom tractor, combine and corn-picker service, and certainly with petroleum products produced by the central organization. They will be able to get their farm machinery from their own factory and it will be serviced in their own shops."

Book Review

TVA—Democracy on the March. By David E. Lilienthal. New York, Harper & Brothers, 1944. $2.50.

Mr. Lilienthal, now chairman of the Tennessee Valley Authority, was once associated with Donald Richberg in the practice of law and later had experience in what has been called the "Wisconsin school of government." In an engaging style he describes the numerous activities of a government corporation which is engaged in the unified development of the resources found in the valley of the Tennessee River.

Although certain of the recent activities of the TVA have necessarily been veiled by the war censorship, this volume tells enough to reveal the significance of the enterprise in all of its phases. These include flood control, navigation, power production and distribution, experimental production of fertilizers, land conservation. The TVA has encouraged numerous local cooperative enterprises. Mr. Lilienthal does not overlook library service or the dense fish population of the warm waters in the reservoirs. The project has been called the greatest public construction project in the world.

This narrative, which may perhaps be described as a case study in public cooperation, neglects no important issue raised by the experiment. Although the river has no politics, the people living nearby seem to have plenty, and Mr. Lilienthal discusses the hazards of scientific social planning in a political world. He devotes two chapters to the subject of decentralization. Here the frankness is refreshing. Mr. Lilienthal says it would have been almost as bad to have run TVA by a bureau from Washington as to have it run by a holding company from New York. Headquarters have been in Knoxville and Mr. Lilienthal makes a convincing statement to the effect that there is a high degree of decentralization in the affairs of the TVA.

—Benson Y. Landis

How to Cooperate

• Most of the subscriptions to Town and Country Church began with the issue of October, 1943. They therefore expire with the September, 1944 issue. You can help to save much time, money and material if you will voluntarily send $1.00 to renew your subscription and have it in our office prior to October 1. This would make unnecessary the mailing of a considerable number of notices.

As soon as wartime paper restrictions are lifted, we expect to enter Town and Country Church as a regular monthly periodical. For the present we continue on the basis of the past year, nine issues for $1.00.

Rural Pastor Honored

• The Nebraska Christian Rural Fellowship has conferred the title of "outstanding rural Nebraska pastor of the year" upon Rev. Lawrence Dry, minister of the Federated Church at Mitchell. The church at Mitchell includes persons from twenty denominations, with Disciples of Christ and Congregational church among the larger numbers.

Sword of the Spirit

• The Roman Catholic Movement in England, known as the Sword of the Spirit, inaugurated by Cardinal Hinsley, published in its bulletin of the same name on June 1, 1944 an article, "Faith, Farming and the Future," by W. Gore Allen. The writer appeals to English Catholics to recover the ways of the husbandman. The address of the Sword of the Spirit is 68 Gloucester Place, London, W. 1.

Small-Farm Family

• *The New York Times* for July 9, 1944, published a statement by the Rt. Rev. Msgr. L. G. Ligutti, Executive Secretary of the National Catholic Rural Life Conference, pleading for national plans for post-war help for the small-farm family. Msgr. Ligutti says that the United States is in this respect lagging behind Great Britain, Ireland, and China.

Lutheran Church in Rural Areas

• Dr. Martin Schroeder is author of an article, "The Country Church—What Does It Mean?", appearing in *The Lutheran,* official organ of the United Lutheran Church in America, Philadelphia, for May 3, 1944. Charts are presented showing the percentage of rural church membership in the various Lutheran bodies, also the percentage of children below age thirteen.

A Church Co-Op That Works

• The Mount Desert, Maine, Larger Parish is written up in a pamphlet under the title above by the well known author, Leigh Mitchell Hodges. Single copies are available without charge on application, while the supply lasts, to Rev. Merton B. McKendry, Northeast Harbor, Maine.

Integral Rural Living

• Mrs. Mildred Jensen Loomis is the author of a Christian Rural Fellowship *Bulletin* under the title above, available at 5 cents a copy through the Christian Rural Fellowship, 156 Fifth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y.

Minister Serves Grange

• One of the "grand old men" of the Rhode Island State Grange is Rev. Gideon A. Burgess. Rhode Island granges and churches recently honored the Congregational clergyman on his 90th birthday.

Service Men Want Farms

• A note from Bismarck, North Dakota, indicates that 88% of the service men replying to a questionnaire said they want to return to farming in that state.

Program of Rural Social Action

1. Circulate books on agriculture and rural life.
2. Organize discussion groups to consider farm problems.
3. Hold forums to hear farm leaders, agricultural specialists and neighboring farmers.
4. Obtain the assistance of the county agricultural extension service in planning community programs.
5. Visit a rural community, experimental farm or other rural project.
6. Practice democracy by enlisting farmers to solve farm problems.
7. Make community welfare central in rural programs.
8. Promote cooperation between private rural organizations and government agricultural agencies for the good of the whole community.
9. Include rural youth in community programs.
10. Teach conservation of natural resources, especially the soil.
11. Support the cooperative movement among farmers.
12. Promote legislation for farmers, especially laws favorable to the family farm.
13. Encourage mutuality among the agricultural people—farm owners, tenants and farm hands—and the residents of rural towns.

—Thomas Alfred Tripp

Brotherhood among Churches

✠ O God, who hast taught us that Thou art our Father and that all we are brethren, bless, we beseech Thee, the churches which are laboring for the welfare of Thy people in rural fields. Direct them in the use of the resources Thou hast given them for the upbuilding of Thy Kingdom and give them grace to minister to Thy people in unity of spirit, in the bond of peace, and in righteousness of life. All of which we ask in the name of Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Prayers for Rural Life, National Council of the Protestant Episcopal Church.

✠ Lord of field and soul, we praise Thee for the promise of ploughed lands and spirits softly open to love and goodness and the future's promise. Hasten the day when the plough-share shall supplant the sword. Forgive us fields furrowed by war and sown with death. Deal with us gently as Thou dost in any way break up the order of our own lives, but make our furrowed souls fruitful. *Amen.*

Gaius Glenn Atkins

The Seed That Shall Be Sown

✠ O God, Thou Lord of Springtime and Harvest, we beseech Thee to bless the seed sown throughout the world for the sustenance of mankind. So water it with the gentle rain from heaven and warm it with the golden sunshine that it may bear fruit an hundredfold, to the glory of Thy Holy Name and the welfare of Thy people; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Rural Life Sunday, 1930

The Problems of Agriculture

✠ O God, by whose inspiration we are taught to know the things that are for our good, guide, we beseech Thee, all those who are endeavoring to solve the problems of country life. Grant that just and adequate solutions of those problems may be found both shortly and surely, so that they who till the soil and herd the flock may enjoy the things which belong to their peace; through Jesus Christ our Lord. *Amen.*

Harrison W. Forman

✠ Lord of seed time and harvest, bless we beseech Thee, the toil of the farmer. Give him joy in his task and the vision, beyond his furrow, of bread enough and to spare. Teach us anew from Thy fields the meanings of the harvest of the soul. Soften our hearts to the hearing of the Master's word and discipline our wayward wills to fruitful obedience. *Amen.*

Gaius Glenn Atkins

On Sunday Mornings

• It is reported that Charles Kingsley, in the country parish of Eversley, England, frequently would say on Sunday mornings from the pulpit, "Here we are again to talk over what is really going on in your soul and mine."

Guide Book for Action

• The Commission on a Just and Durable Peace, 297 Fourth Avenue, New York 10, N. Y., publishes *A Guidebook for Action* with respect to the Six Pillars of Peace. Single copies are 8c each from the Commission.

Cape Cod Plan of Prayer

• A movement for prayer, initiated by a layman, Walter Dwyer, West Dennis, Mass., is receiving publicity through the religious press. Further information about this plan for a concerted, spiritual emphasis may be secured from Mr. Dwyer.

Contributors

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Contributions Wanted

• Every reader is a potential contributor of material for this paper.

We need three types of material:

(1) Articles of about 900 words (to fill a page), descriptive of a local program.

(2) Short items; news, plans, publications available.

(3) Illustrations; glossy photos, line drawings, cuts of rural scenes.

Circulars Available

• Quantities of circulars describing Town and Country Church are available without charge to any reader. Simply drop us a post card letting us know how many copies you would like to distribute.